

From Periphery to Core  
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Amidst the volatility of late medieval Genoese activity throughout the Mediterranean and into the Atlantic, a stable pattern emerges – the 1291 Vivaldi expedition and Columbus’s more famous first voyage both went west in order to reach the east. In 1291, the Mamluks pushed the final crusader remnant at Acre into the sea. In that same year from Genoa, the Vivaldi expedition sailed west out into the Atlantic, intending to reach India by circumnavigating Africa. Two centuries later, Columbus too sailed west, and for the same reason. From the “hotbox” of the late medieval Mediterranean emerged innovative and even quixotic strategies, which nevertheless remains embedded in a crusading rationale and ethos.